



**MIDWEST**  
TRANSITION TO ORGANIC  
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

United States Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
National Organic Program  
Transition to Organic Partnership Program



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## MEET TOPP

### USDA INVESTS IN TRANSITIONING TO ORGANIC, MOSA NAMED AS THE MIDWEST REGIONAL CENTER

By Allison Walent, Midwest TOPP Program Director

In August 2022, Agriculture Secretary, Tom Vilsack, unveiled the Organic Transition Initiative. Through this 300 million dollar, multi-agency USDA effort, the USDA hopes to open opportunities for new and beginning farmers; build and strengthen organic markets and streams of income for farmers and producers; and expand direct consumer access to organic foods through increased production. The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Risk Management Agency, and Agricultural Marketing Service each have a major role in the Organic Transition Initiative. The USDA's Natural Resources and Conservation Service will focus on technical assistance; the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will focus on market development and organic market security through the Organic Market Development Grant Program, and the National Organic Program will focus primarily on farmer mentoring and wrap-around support for farmers choosing to transition their operation.

The Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) network is divided into six regions: the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Plains, Northwest, and West/Southwest. TOPP regions were set geographically to form a mix of states that are well-represented in organic and states that are currently underserved. The Midwest Region represents AR, KY, IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, OH, TN, and WI. TOPP is a collaborative effort that will involve many partners working together towards a common goal. Organizations in these regions are actively forming partnerships to serve transitioning and existing organic farmers. While some partner organizations have already been identified, partner organizations will continue to be identified and included throughout the initiative.

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce that MOSA was selected to serve as the (TOPP) Regional Center for the Midwest. The selection criteria were the number of certified organic clients represented, proven track record of partnering with other organizations, ability to accommodate the additional project, and the agency's accreditation "good standing" status.

Through TOPP, the Midwest Regional Center and its partner organizations will connect farmers transitioning to organic with local, experienced organic mentors; provide farmer training and education; provide education and technical assistance on agronomy, organic certification, extension, conservation planning, organic regulations, certification cost share, business development, and marketing; build networks and strengthen the organic community; develop and expand access to technical assistance and training; and support workforce training and development.

Are you an experienced organic farmer and interested in sharing your knowledge with new farmers? Are you a member of an organization that you think would benefit from partnering with us? Are you a new farmer (or do you know someone) who would like to be paired with a mentor? If any of these is true, please complete the form below. We will contact you to discuss your interest and opportunities to get involved!

To learn more about TOPP or to apply to become a mentor or mentee, visit:  
[www.organictransition.org](http://www.organictransition.org)